Alumni

Lauren Wemischner, '05, is working as a freelance lighting designer and just started a new job as the lighting director with Diavolo Dance. Interesting projects coming up for her include a collaboration with the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust and a Virginia Avenue Project called *Reading Through* at the Miles Memorial Playhouse in Santa Monica. She designed the College of the Canyons' Winter Dance concert at the Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center. She went to Park City, Utah, with Diavolo for the holidays and will travel with them to Bogota, Columbia, in the spring.

Spencer Ferguson, '06, was hired by Rubinos & Mesia Engineers to be a team member in the design phase for a capital improvement project for the Chicago Transit Authority. These projects typically involve improvements to large bus, rail, and transit-related facilities. He develops conceptual drawings, renderings, and specifications of architectural and structural designs.

Sibba Hartunian, '06, is writing and illustrating children's books, and she was recently featured in *Uppercase* magazine. She's also taking on some non-children's book illustration projects. In addition to illustration, she teaches after school at a progressive elementary school in New York City. The school reminds her a lot of Wildwood, which is why she loves her experience there.

Sophie Ragir, '07, works for J/P Haitian Relief Organization, which is a nonprofit founded by Sean Penn in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti. The organization focuses on developing medical, engineering, reconstruction, education, community development, and reforestation programs.

Madison Rootenberg, '07, left her job as the assistant youth, family, and camp director at the Levin Jewish Community Center to go back to school for Wildlife Rehabilitation at the Animal Behavior Institute. She hopes to be working with animals full time by the summer in a sanctuary setting. She is happily living in Durham, North Carolina, with her boyfriend and rescued dog, and she volunteers at local animal shelters on the weekend.

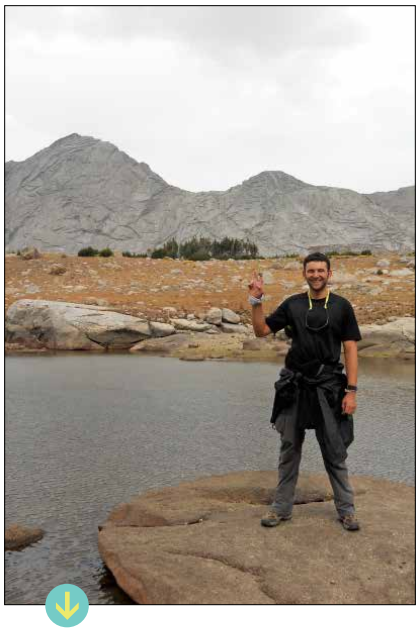
Katia Johnstone, '08, spent the past year working in New York as a program coordinator at iMentor, an organization that matches mentors one-on-one with students from low-income backgrounds in an effort to increase students' access to college. As a program coordinator, she helped implement the program by working with 9th graders at one of their partner high schools and facilitating relationships between students and mentors. She recently accepted a position as a teacher-in-residence at Slide Ranch, an educational farm north of San Francisco that focuses on exposing young people to food systems, environmental conservation, and our inherent interconnectedness with the natural world. Katia will live and work on the farm during the 11-month program while assisting with educational programming and farm maintenance.

Zach Robinson, '08, graduated from Northwestern University in Illinois with a major in music composition. He has been working for composer Christophe Beck on various films since he graduated. He was recently hired to be the composer and music producer on YouTube's first comedy series.

Melanie Carroll, '09, recently joined the operations team at Pave, a finance tech startup that's a lending platform dedicated to providing accessible loans to a younger generation. Before joining Pave, she worked at a startup company that focused on networking and building a strong social community through a membership organization with seven active chapters around the country. She enjoys working for a startup company because the challenges force her to grow and learn each day.

Liza DeWitt, '09, started classes in January at Antioch University in Los Angeles toward her teaching credential and subsequent master's degree. Her interest in teaching started when she attended the Coalition for Essential Schools (CES) conferences in high school and was inspired by educators brainstorming ways to make school more engaging for students. She believes her Wildwood education had a huge impact on her interest in teaching. Project-based learning gave her confidence as a learner, and she believes it's a very empowering approach. Liza is excited to learn more about how to be an effective teacher.

Sophia Poulos, '10, is in her final year at Smith College in Massachusetts and is currently applying to the Master of Engineering and Master of Science programs for structural engineering. Her yearlong senior project includes designing a portion of the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail, which will extend into Williamsburg from Northampton. For the past six years she worked at UCLA, engineering earthquake simulations as a field engineer with the Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation research team, and last summer, she was the intern coordinator there. She took a semester off to work in Utica, New York, testing a 1910 10-story reinforced concrete cotton warehouse and then fitting it for implosion. She spent several weeks at Georgia Tech doing similar work. For the past few years, she has been working at Watts Towers with preservationists from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



Benji Miller, '15, deferred acceptance at USC, taking a gap year between high school and college. He is currently in Costa Rica as part of a program called Winterline Global Skills. He will travel to 11 different countries over nine months, learning skills from advanced scuba diving to computer programming. He says that it's been "the adventure of a lifetime" and that he's used many of the Habits of Mind and Heart that he learned at Wildwood. If you're curious to learn more about Benji's journey, go to his blog benjisawesomebloglog.wordpress.com.

Elementary Alumni

Jessica Elliott, '84, lives in Los Angeles, is married, and has a 7-year-old girl named Nola. She is a designer and has two accessories companies, as well as a third company doing private label fashion accessories production for companies like Bebe, Guess, Joie, and Rachel Palley.

Chris Jacobs, '85, is a creative director/writer at an ad agency in Portland, Maine. He's held similar jobs at agencies in Portland, Oregon; San Francisco; and Boston. In his spare time, he's an amateur illustrator. His daughter, Chloe, turns 8 in February.

Helen Scheer, '85, is making her own documentaries and does freelance work for other filmmakers. She recently started a tenure track job as an assistant professor of film and electronic arts at California State University, Long Beach, focusing on creative nonfiction. She lives in Venice, California, a block away from where she grew up.

Lily Thompson, '85, works as the director of communications for Sonoma Academy, an independent high school in Santa Rosa, California. It's similar to Wildwood, and she's enjoying the feeling of coming full circle and giving back. Lily has spent much of her professional life as a brand strategist, working in marketing and communications for natural products companies and nonprofit organizations. She lives in Petaluma, California, and has a 7-year-old daughter named Penelope. She recognizes now how profoundly lucky she was to receive the education she did at Wildwood. She especially cherishes those elementary school memories.

Rachel Engel Ullizo, '85, graduated from college in Denver and began working with Andersen Consulting (now Accenture), where she's been employed for the last 20 years. She has two very active girls ages 10 and 7, and when she's not working, she's spending time with them. Rachel now lives in Chicago.

Jesse Wegman, '85, and his wife Kyra live in Brooklyn, New York, with their daughter Samara, who is 18 months old. He's on the editorial board of *The New York Times*, where he writes the paper's editorials about the Supreme Court and national legal issues. He worked for NPR for six years after college, then went to law school, loved it, and also realized he would never be a good lawyer, so he returned to journalism. He's been at *The New York Times* for a few years now and really enjoys it.

Lewis Bogdanovic, '86, received his Bachelor of Arts from San Francisco State University in biochemistry, attended veterinary school at the University of California, Davis, and had postdoctoral training in anatomic pathology at Cornell University in New York. He is currently practicing as a small-animal veterinarian in Davis, California. He is married and has a 9-year-old son named Duncan.

Seth Paris, '86, lives with his wife in Monterey, California, where they are raising their son Theo, who is 11 years old. Seth spent 15-plus years teaching the Feldenkrais Method of movement education to help people with chronic pain move better and feel better. He recently returned to school and earned a master's degree in occupational therapy, and he is now working for California Children's Services, providing medical therapy for children with physical disabilities, ages 0 to 21 years.

Wildwood Elementary School
Grades 5 & 6, Spring 1985